

Red-necked Footman *Atolmis rubricollis* (L.) (Lep.: Arctiidae) in Essex

On the night of 17 June 2000, with two other members of Essex Moth Group, Ian C. Rose and Reg Fry, a mercury-vapour lamp and a trap were run at Bunting's Meadow, Lexden, Colchester from 10pm until midnight to monitor the moth population in this municipal open space and small nature reserve, which is owned by Colchester Borough Council. The 25 acres of grassland, hedgerows, flowery banks and field margins and three small spinneys adjoin a larger Council-owned open space and invertebrate reserve known as The Hilly Fields. The Bunting's site once covered 52 acres and was a seed production farm and a trial ground for flower and vegetable varieties.

Among the night's total of 54 species (macros and micros) was a fresh specimen of the Red-necked Footman *Atolmis rubricollis* found in Reg Fry's Robinson trap. This is only the second record for Essex for the past two decades, the other being from Friday Wood, south of Colchester, recorded by B. Goodey and R. Arthur on 27 June 1986. Single specimens, probably immigrants, were recorded by A.J. Dewick at his Bradwell-on-Sea light in 1951 and 1952.

In case the Lexden specimen of *rubricollis* could indicate possible residency rather than being an immigrant or vagrant, Ian Rose and I returned to Bunting's Meadow with an m.v. lamp on the night of 19 June. No luck with *rubricollis* on this occasion, but among the 42 species recorded was a Dotted Fan-foot *Macrochilo cribrumalis*. This is the first record of this usually fen and salt marsh species for this inland site, which is on the outskirts of Colchester, but close to a recently-created wetland area fed by springs.

These records from Bunting's Meadow give me much personal pleasure as I grew up before and during the war on the Bunting's farm, where my late father was the manager for 40 years and where I started my lifelong interest in Lepidoptera among the acres of flowers grown for seed.—JOE FIRMIN, 55 Chapel Road, West Bergholt, Colchester, Essex.

***Bledius talpa* Gyll. (Col.: Staphylinidae) – a former British species?**

That this very distinctive *Bledius* was once a member of our fauna is strongly suggested (but by no means proved), by the presence in the British beetle collection at The Natural History Museum of two ancient specimens, labelled as determined by P.M. Hammond, 1975. Most unfortunately they are without data, and in extremely bad condition through having originally been pinned and the pins removed at some later time. They are marked only "W.A. Power / B.M. 1896-69". Whether he was related to the well-known coleopterist J.A. Power I cannot say, but it would appear likely. For the above details I am indebted to my friend K.C. Lewis. *Bledius talpa* may at once be known by its dark metallic-blue elytra with long, pale, waved pubescence. It is a rare species of scattered and mainly southern distribution, but is found in (for instance) Denmark, so its occurrence in Britain can hardly be excluded.—A.A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QG.